



January 2010

VISN 19 Network Director Update

Glen W. Grippen



National News: (Click on titles to read full press release)

[VA to Begin Recovery of Post-9/11 GI Bill Advance Payments](#) -

The Department of Veterans Affairs is beginning the process of recovering advance payments made available during the fall 2009 semester to Veterans and servicemembers who applied for

education benefits. (1/23/10)

[VA Reaching Out to Students and Schools to Speed Benefit Payments](#) -

In a coordinated effort to speed up the processing of Post 9/11 GI Bill education benefits this spring, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced today that it has been reaching out to student Veterans, servicemembers, university officials and other partners to meet its commitment to an aggressive processing goal by Feb. 1, 2010. Feb. 1 is the first date spring payments are due and presently VA has processed over 72,000 of the approximately 103,000 spring enrollments received. Since inception of the historic new program last year, VA has paid over \$1.3 billion in benefits to more than 170,000 students. (1/20/10)

[VA Wins National Award for Safe Medication Practices](#) -

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has won top national honors from the independent Institute for Safe Medication Practices for its excellence in preventing medication errors. (1/19/10)

[VA, DoD Expand Ranks of Federal Recovery](#)

[Coordinators](#) - Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the hiring of five new Federal Recovery Coordinators, bringing to 20 the number of professionals coordinating care for the most seriously injured service members (1/14/10)

[Green Globe Certification Awarded to 15 VA Medical Centers](#) -

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced 15 of its medical centers have been cited by the Green Building Initiative for their efforts to achieve sustainable energy. (1/7/10)

[VA Statement about 2010 Benefits and Programs](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) wants to inform Veterans and other beneficiaries of the following changes that will take effect in 2010. (1/7/10)

[Veterans Affairs and Kaiser Permanente Share](#)

[Electronic Health Information to Improve Care for Veterans](#) -

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Kaiser Permanente recently launched a pilot medical data exchange program in San Diego using the Nationwide Health Information Network. This innovative pilot enables clinicians from VA and Kaiser Permanente to obtain a more comprehensive view of a patient's health using electronic health record information, including information about health issues, medications, and allergies. (1/6/10)

VISN 19:



Updates on our four rural health projects:

Primary Care Telehealth Outreach Clinics (PCTOCs)

[Telehealth Equipment:](#) The delivery and installation of telehealth equipment for all Office of Rural Health projects is targeted to be complete in

February 2010.

PCTOC Space, Locations/Leases:

Montana

- Plentywood – operational target May.
- Hamilton – 11 bids under review, site visits completed 1/28/2010, operational target – April.

Cheyenne

- Rawlins, WY – Operational target- April 30.

ECHCS

- Salida, CO – Operational.

Grand Junction

- Moab, UT- Operational target - April.
- Glenwood Springs, CO – Three potential sites – Operational target – June.

SLC

- Idaho Falls and Price – Operational target – Mid April.

Sheridan

- Evanston – encountering difficulty getting bids. As a result, we are unable to set operational target date.
- Worland – Finalizing build out arrangements – operational target - April.

General Telehealth – Specialty Consultations:

ECHCS General Telehealth (GT)-TeleSpecialty Service Clinicians identified in Endocrinology, Tele-TBI – Cognitive Impairment, Tele-Pain, Tele-Dementia Services, Telemental Health – PTSD, Tele-Derm, Tele-Wound Care, Tele-Surgery, Tele-Cardiology, and Tele-Tumor Board. Specialty Scheduling consult management system to manage both inter and intra facility consults, service agreements, clinic set-up/scheduling, consult templates, progress note templates, communication and follow-up being finalized. Specialty staffing is now in operations development for Endocrinology, Pain, and Tele-Dementia consultations.

Extended Education and Wellness –Priority courses (Diabetes Mellitus, Tobacco Cessation, Medication Management) established. Evidence based patient education programming for Heart Disease, Diabetes, Heart Failure, COPD, Asthma, and others are being purchased and patient education staff have been hired at ECHCS.

vICU Project: The vICU Project is operational and successful via telephone. Telehealth Equipment is on station at all facility sites and installation scheduled to be completed in February. The Clinical Information System has been contracted and installation and operations are expected by March 2010.

New VA Montana Health Care System Director Announced

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs announced Robin L. Korogi has been appointed to the position of Director, VA Montana Health Care System, Ft. Harrison, MT, effective February 14, 2010.



Robin Korogi is currently the Associate Director for the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System since January 6, 2008. Prior to this appointment, she held the position as the Director of Human Resources, Leadership & Education from March 2004 to December 2007. She has a total of 30 years of federal service,

with eleven years in the Veterans Health Administration. She is a mentor for Leadership Evaluation and Development (LEAD), Leadership Development Institute (LDI), and the VA Executive Career Field (ECF) Leadership Program.

Ms. Korogi retired from the Air Force Reserves after 22 years and is a veteran of Operation Desert Storm. Ms. Korogi graduated from Park College in March 1991 with a Bachelor's Degree in Management and received a Master's Degree in Human Resource Management from Utah State University in June 1997. Ms. Korogi is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Health Care Administration.

Ms. Korogi is a graduate of the Executive Career Field Development Program, Class of 2006 and is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), Federal Executive Association (FEA), and Utah Society for HealthCare HR Administrators (USHRA).

VISN 19 welcomes Robin to her new role!

AbilityOne Procurement Champion!

The AbilityOne Champion in Procurement is given to a procurement official who demonstrates exemplary support of the National Institute for Severely handicapped contract programs.

Mark Moriarty, VISN 19 Contracting was recognized as this month's AbilityOne Procurement Champion.



(L-R): Barry Howard, NISH Program Manager, George Sawaya, VP of Contracts, Goodwill Industries, Mark Moriarty, VISN 19, Carole Pisko, Bayaud Industries President, John Cantwell, Regional Director for NISH, Davis Heinenger, CEO and Founder of Bayaud Industries

Moriarty's determination to create more jobs for people with severe disabilities is noticed by all with whom he works. "Continuing his quest for creating new jobs for people with disabilities, once again he put in place VISN-19 first Patient Escort Services contract," said

John Cantwell, deputy region director, NISH, South Central Region. "This latest project has been very successful," said Cantwell. On this contract, escorts are responsible for transporting patients to therapies, delivering medical test results to various medical floors and time sensitive specimens to the appropriate labs.

Moriarty's continued support and dedication also helps overcome any resistance AbilityOne contracts may face. "He is definitely a catalyst behind the scene educating his fellow team members on the value of AbilityOne and ensuring opportunities are equally spread amongst the many different social-economic programs," said Barry Howard, senior project manager, NISH, South Central Region.

ECHCS



Denver, CO – Replacement Medical Center Facility:

The Denver VAMC is providing monthly updates on the status of the Denver Replacement Hospital. These updates are distributed via e-mail monthly and can be found on

<http://www.denver.va.gov/projecteagle/index.asp>.

Update of Colorado Springs CBOC: The relocation of the Colorado Springs clinic is still in the planning stages. The goal is to make this a larger primary care and mental health clinic with a variety of new support services. Keeping with the veteran centric model, radiology, laboratory, dental, audiology, optometry, physical therapy and some specialty clinic services will all be available to Veterans in the Colorado Springs area.

The current planning for radiology includes basic services plus MRI, CAT scan, ultrasound and mammography capabilities. The laboratory planned in Colorado Springs would do the lab work for all of the clinics in southern Colorado. Some expansion for audiology, audiology and optometry is planned in order to meet projected workload for those specialties. Physical therapy and prosthetic support will also be in this clinic. Exam rooms are being planned to accommodate specialty care clinics as needed.

Final approval of the plan is imminent. Once approval is given two processes will begin: site acquisition and space planning. The goal is to have this relocation completed by March 2012.

VA Montana Health Care System:



US Department of Veterans Affairs, Montana Awards \$6.7 Million Contract for Construction of a Twenty-Four Bed Inpatient Mental Health Facility

The \$6.7 million dollar contract to build a 24 bed mental health inpatient unit at the Fort Harrison VA Medical Center was awarded to Service Disabled Veteran Owned Business, Pacific North, LLC from Payson Utah. The prime contractor, Pacific North LLC has teamed with a company Control, Inc. also from Utah and together they bring over 50 years of experience in construction. Although this is a Utah firm, they will be subcontracting a large portion of the work to Montana companies.

The twenty four bed inpatient mental health facility will allow Veterans needing residential rehabilitation in substance abuse and/or post traumatic stress disorder to stay in Montana for their care. Currently Montana Veterans needing these longer stay programs are required to travel to VA facilities in North Dakota, Wyoming or Idaho. This is a much needed addition to the VA Montana Healthcare System and will allow VA Montana to provide a full array of comprehensive services and continue to expand community partnerships that currently exist for both inpatient and outpatient mental health care. The partnership with community resources has facilitated the provision of community based services for our Veterans that live in rural areas of Montana. The addition of inpatient specialty units, that have not been available in Montana previously, will afford Veterans and their families the ability to meet their needs and support recovery in the state of Montana.

VA Montana will be inviting the public to a ground breaking of the new facility sometime in January of 2010. This is an exciting time for Montana Veterans.

VA Montana Awarded Two Grants Totaling \$707,172 to Benefit Elderly and Disabled Veterans by Keeping Them in Their Homes as Long as Possible and Avoid Institutional Care

Billings Clinic Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly Partnership

VA Montana Healthcare System received a grant to partner with a private company, Billings Clinic, to pilot Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) services for Montana Veterans in both Yellowstone County and Livingston, Montana. PACE provides community-based care and services to frail, elderly individuals as an alternative to institutional nursing home placement. The PACE program provides all health care and related services to participants over time and across all delivery settings.

PACE prevents premature institutionalization by providing the community care and services to aid Veterans to remain living in their home and communities; expand home and community based services to areas that do not currently have these services and to those Veterans who do not qualify for Medicaid and/or are living in rural Montana.

Home Based Primary Care

Provide maximal care in rural and frontier Montana to Veterans with complex medical conditions helping decrease institutional care. The Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) will be a nurse practitioner run program extending primary care to Veterans in their homes. Other members of the interdisciplinary HBPC team will include a social worker, occupational or physical therapist and a physician. The team will provide assistance to caregivers supporting concerns with housing and financial issues. They will help improve home safety, fall prevention, maximizing independence of the Veterans. A consulting physician will provide medical oversight. Veterans, who are at risk for institutional care, use the VA Emergency Department frequently, Veterans who are frail or whose care givers need a break from the long term care needs.

The pilot programs will begin immediately. In the first year of the program VA Montana plans to serve 25-30 patients in the HBPC program and 15 in the PACE program. Susan Fuehrer, Director, VA Montana Healthcare System stated, "I am very excited to be able to provide these services to Veterans that are currently not available in the home. The volume of patients may seem low, but extensive travel in rural Montana limits the number of patients that can be served. Keeping just one Veteran out of a long term care facility and keeping them in their home is invaluable."

VAMTHCS bids a fond farewell to Acting Director



Ms. Fuehrer and VA Montana staff

Ms. Sue Fuehrer has completed her detail as Acting Director for the VAMTHCS and will be returning to the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center where she serves as Associate Director.

Mrs. Fuehrer was appointed as Acting Medical Center Director of the VA Montana Health Care System October 13, 2009 following the retirement of the previous medical center director.



Susan Fuehrer, Acting Director and Lee Logan, Deputy Network Director

VISN 19 owes a debt of gratitude to MS. Fuehrer for her outstanding leadership in the VA Montana Health Care System.

Sheridan VAMC:



Veterans in North Western Wyoming now have a place to get care without driving for hours. The new Afton Outreach Clinic located on 125 S. Washington Street began seeing patients on January 25, 2010. It has been a two year process to get this little clinic open but all the work has been well worth the wait.



Afton, WY CBOC

"It is a beautiful clinic, in a beautiful setting" said Community Based Outpatient Clinic Director Harriet Browning, RN, MSN. "The Veterans in the Star Valley area have been patiently waiting for a clinic, so for us to be able to open the doors on January 25, 2010 is very exciting."

The clinic had walk-ins and one scheduled appointment on its first day. Hours will be Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8am-4pm and Tuesdays 9:30am-6pm. Appointments can be made by calling 307-886-5266. CBOC staff is now working on opening telehealth clinics in Worland and Evanston Wyoming early this summer.

VASLCHCS:



VASLCHCS Veteran Gets Hockey Player Surprise

Viet Nam Veteran Greg Kemp grew up on the ponds of Minnesota with ice skates laced to his feet. He's about the biggest hockey fan you'll find that's why last week's surprise visit from two Utah Grizzlies hockey players was so overwhelmingly touching. Kemp sat ring side for years shouting words of encouragement to "his" Grizzlies, but now his seat sits empty.

Kemp was diagnosed with ALS last spring and is deteriorating quickly. He can no longer go to the games but his caregivers at the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System along with friends and family thought why not bring a piece of the game to him.

Days later two of his favorite players showed up at his West Valley City home along with a string of reporters there to capture the shock on Kemp's face.



Vlady Nikiforov/Grizzlies Forward/Brett Parnham (in back)
Grizzlies Center/Greg Kemp

Coincidentally he was wearing a Utah Grizzlies T-shirt. The players presented him with a jersey (soon to be signed by all the players) and a blanket. The Vice

President of the team even threw in a free suite hoping to get Kemp to one last game.

Neither Greg nor those by his side know how much time he has left but all are moved by his courageous attitude in the face of this deadly disease. While showing off his old tattered skates and joking about how his first blades were made of wood, Kemp told the two young players "Give it your best...I know you guys will."

Veterans Telehealth Education Center

The VASCLHCS is opening a new Veterans Learning and Telehealth Education Center. The purpose of this center is to provide patient education and telehealth services, including telehealth broadcasts to rural Veterans, new patient orientation (NPO) and other patient education activities. For example: The VASLCHCS New Patient Orientation answers frequently asked questions and help Veterans navigate what can be at times a complicated system. It also explains benefits and programs throughout our health care system that Veterans may not be aware of.

The computers in the center will also serve to authenticate more My HealtheVet users. The VA Salt Lake City Health Care center is proud to offer this comfortable space where Veterans can actually get hands on, one on one time with employees eager to help. It is convenient and easy to find in the medical center. The Veterans Learning & Telehealth Education Center will further empower our Veterans to take a more active role in their health care experience.

Grand Junction VAMC:



The Grand Junction VA Medical Center continues to progress on a number of both infrastructure and patient care projects over the last month.

The Craig TeleHealth Clinic will be changing locations within the next few months in order to accommodate both an increased demand by Veterans in the Craig Area, and the increasing number of programs being offered through the clinic. These include a MOVE class,

a pilot HiDef dermatology program in partnership with Denver class and several other programs.

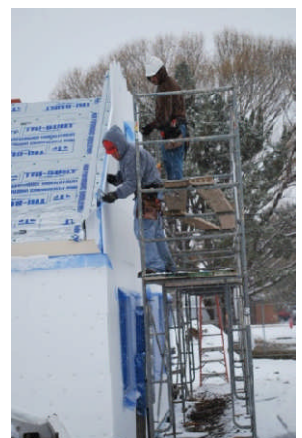
Community support for the two TeleHealth clinics planned for Moab and Glenwood Springs continues to grow. In Glenwood Springs, the Elks chapter, which is also closely tied to the local VFW and American Legion, has offered to help the clinic establish a presence not just with veterans, but as a partner in the community in Glenwood Springs.

In Moab, the community hospital has invited Grand Junction staff to their annual Health Fair and the hospital's leadership has asked to meet with VA representative to better understand how they can work with the VA.

Community support of the Medical Center has also continued to grow across the Western Slope. In the past month, staff has received invitations to make presentations from Craig to Telluride and regional media have continued to promote the facility. The Grand Junction Free Press requested input for a four to eight page pull out on Veterans Benefits and Health Care to be published in February.



Seismic upgrades to the Community Living Center (CLC) are complete and the CLC now has full access to all patient rooms again. Construction on a 4,000 square foot building that will house Recreational Therapy programs and add office space is also underway.



In addition, The Medical Center reached a major milestone towards breaking ground on its expansion project at its last planning session with the contractor.

Cheyenne VAMC:



The addition of the Cheyenne VAMC surgical suites has progressed to a point where nearly all of the exterior walls and roofs are weather tight. This phase of the project is a milestone as construction will continue throughout the remainder of winter and spring regardless of temperatures, winds and snow. Construction crews last week were spraying a layer of fire retardant onto all interior walls and ceilings. The next major phase will be to install ducts for ventilation, water and utilities followed by the assembly of interior walls.

The Mobile Telehealth Clinic has also reached a milestone; beginning in February, this clinic on wheels will begin serving the fourth and last planned community. Prior to when the Cheyenne VA received this vehicle in August, 2009, we provided healthcare in a total of four sites of care. With the addition of this mobile clinic, the number of sites where Cheyenne VA is present has expanded to eight.

Additionally, as the Rawlins (WY) Primary Care Telehealth Outreach Clinic (PCTOC) develops; this will increase the number of sites where Cheyenne VAMC provides care to nine.

Six disabled Veterans are participating in the local Recreation Therapy adaptive ski program. This six week program creates a unique opportunity for men and women to learn how to use various adaptive ski equipment as well as re-discovery what limitations they have (or don't have!)

This program is conducted through a joint effort with the Eldora Special Recreation Program (ESRP). This therapeutic recreation activity



Larry Bostick, participating in the Cheyenne VAMC's Adaptive Ski Program

complements the VA's National Disabled Veterans Winter Ski Clinic held annually in Snowmass, CO.

Highlighting Another Outstanding Federal Program - The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass

Recreation sites managed by the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Forest Service are exciting places to visit.

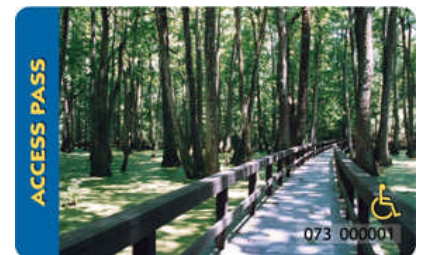
America the Beautiful – National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass – Access Pass – Free.

This is a lifetime pass for U.S. citizens or permanent residents with permanent disabilities. Documentation is required to obtain the pass.

Acceptable documentation includes:

statement by a licensed

physician; document issued by a Federal agency such as the Veteran's Administration, Social Security Disability Income or Supplemental Security Income; or document issued by a State agency such as a vocational rehabilitation agency.



America the Beautiful – National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass – Access Pass

The pass provides access to, and use of, Federal recreation sites that charge an Entrance or Standard Amenity. The pass admits the pass holder and passengers in a non-commercial vehicle at per vehicle fee areas and pass holder + 3 adults, not to exceed 4 adults, at per person fee areas (children under 16 are admitted free). The pass can only be obtained in person at the park. The Access Pass provides a 50 percent discount on some Expanded Amenity Fees charged for facilities and services such as camping, swimming, boat launching, and specialized interpretive services. In some cases where Expanded Amenity Fees are charged, only the pass holder will be given the 50 percent price reduction. The pass is non-transferable and generally does NOT cover or reduce special recreation permit fees or fees charged by concessionaires.